

# 4th BCT crowned basketball champions in stunning finale

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Editor

## BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

With 2.6 seconds remaining in Wednesday's post basketball championship at Stout Gym, the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, trailing by a point, called a timeout. In the huddle, Marcus Brown said nine words.

"Just get the ball to me. I got you."

The team walked back on court to await the inbound pass. The ball was thrown to Brown, who took it from half court and, like a man possessed, dribbled it past a pair of defenders to the outside arc and took his shot. The buzzer sounded. Seconds later, he was at the bottom of a pile of ecstatic teammates and fans. He'd just made the biggest three-pointer of his life.

"It was crazy," said Brown after his team's 60-58 win over Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 3rd Battalion, 6th Air Defense Artillery. "It was like no other feeling in the world. We worked hard all year, and it feels great to know it all paid off."

As exciting as the victory was, it very easily could have gone the other way. Less than four seconds before Brown's climactic three-pointer, 3-6 ADA's point guard Elizier Rivera sank a seemingly impossible shot from practically behind the backboard, giving his team an exhale-inducing lead after trailing for most of the second half. Losing the game was hard for Rivera and his teammates, but he said it will definitely go down as one of the most exciting in Fort Bliss' history.

"We knew coming into the game that it was going to come down to the last second, but nobody expected anything like this," said Rivera. "We knew the ball was going to go to (Brown) so we tried to double-team him, but he was a little too quick for us and he made that shot."

The relentlessly determined 3-6 ADA players held their own throughout the entire 40 minutes, garnering 25 points in the first half. Rivera accounted for the bulk of his team's scorecard, earning 19 – including a trio of three-pointers. Stopping Rivera became his team's prime objective in the second half, said Brown.

"Going into the final minutes, we wanted to subdue their three-point shooter," he said. "We were able to limit those, so then the team just stayed aggressive on offense."

Power forward Mike Teichman and shooting guard Malcolm Weston were 3-6 ADA's only other first-half scorers, earning six points between them.

Ironically, Brown's offensive prowess didn't catch fire until the second half. He scored only four points in his first 20 minutes on the court, versus closing out the game with an impressive 15. Teammate Earl Frazier also had a hot night, racking up 16 points and four three-pointers in the process.

The 4th BCT squad held a substantial lead for the majority of the last half, but 3-6 ADA slowly and surely caught up thanks to a well-paced offense and being aggressive with defensive rebounds. The team's celebration after Rivera put them in the lead with less than four seconds remaining was energetic and well-earned, but it didn't come close to matching the intensity that erupted on the court after Brown sank that perfect shot.

Teammates hoisted Brown on their shoulders and later, during the trophy presentation, presented him with the game ball.

"We had a tough year in Iraq, working hard and fighting the fight," said Brown.

"Everyone in the unit gets a piece of this championship."

Col. Stephen Twitty, commander of 4th BCT, 1st Armored Div., praised the team after the game, saying they "displayed total teamwork, and that is what made them successful."